

THE CARRACK

THE word employed to designate the larger ships of an indeterminate period, which certainly embraced the 14th, 15th, and part of the 16th centuries, and probably a considerable period of time prior to the earlier date mentioned above, was carrack. Appearing in various forms such as carraca, carraque, and kraeck, the term is of doubtful origin. Jal rejects its derivation from *Κάρραβος*. Mr. Nance says that the word is of Mediterranean origin, but does not state the source.

During the period above mentioned it was essentially a vessel designed to carry large burdens, but often employed also for purposes of war, and was undoubtedly an integral part of the shipping of all European maritime nations, although, as to some countries, it may not be possible to identify it by name with any particular individual ship.

The carrack differed from the nef in that it was bigger, of greater draught, and had higher top-sides. Some were probably as large as one thousand tons.

Fortunately we have one excellent representation and several other tolerable ones upon which to found our illustration. It must be continually borne in mind that the forms of hull and rigging of the carracks, as well as of practically all other vessels, at any given date would be found to have